

WEBINAR QUESTIONS

Despite the efforts of the panellists, several questions remained unanswered. Listing them here gives a sense of the many challenges that would need to be further discussed in order to seek and identify adapted solutions. For the sake of transparency, we are also listing the written answers that were provided during the Webinar.

FULL LIST OF QUESTIONS RAISED DURING THE WEBINAR.

Questions raised were categorized in 3: 1/general questions, 2/specific thematic questions, 3/context specific questions

General Questions

1. Before COVID19 we were deeply looking into finding mechanisms to operationalize the Nexus on the ground. Is it still relevant to continue the efforts towards this goal? Is there an institutional priority to see the Nexus as a programmatic solution to the COVID19 global prevention and response?

Answer (Michael Köhler): Yes, this is being done. DEVCO is actually transferring more than 90 million Euros from its budget lines to ECHO for COVID-related implementation. ECHO is truly thankful for that.

2. Nexus is about supporting institutions and civil society local organisations not necessary providing money to the big INGO's which will forget their solidarity when the momentum will come. We should question what would be the role of INGOs and UN in the Nexus. Technical assistance, community support, monitoring and referral. Nexus in C19 should support social protection mechanisms, access to labour and access to food and agriculture.

Answer : Nexus is first and foremost a programming method and a way of coordinating action on the ground. It must involve all implementing actors.

Thank you and agreed for the clarification on of the scope of Nexus but the role of each actors should be clearer which is not the case and provides lots of confusion. In the context of C19 Nexus should have clear priorities and specific strategies and off course context specific.

3. Since the beginning of the pandemic, we have been hearing a lot about the humanitarian-development nexus in the context of the global response, but not much about the peace/security pillar. Do the speakers believe the 'Triple Nexus' is less relevant in this context, or is it that the third pillar is still ill-defined and needs to be better defined?

Answer : I guess you are not wrong, at least regarding the current phase of the crisis. This has to do with the fact that the peace part of the nexus manages much less money. It rather mobilises other resources such a mediation, diplomacy etc. These elements come to bear better when the crisis extends beyond health to socio-economic problems and leads to cracks in societies,

communities, between ethnic groups etc. I fear we might still be getting there, not the least because of the ensuing food security crisis.

4. How do you foresee the end to this crisis? There have been many efforts over the last few decades to reform the sector to be more coordinated and to better respond to emergencies. As we already know the secondary effects are inevitable, what are the major multi-lateral agencies doing to act collectively and to address this emergency strategically, both financially and programmatically?
5. There is an inherent problem with sequencing however. In fragile and conflict-affected states, given a confluence of exacerbating factors, if Covid-19 evolves at the same pace as seen elsewhere, we can not only expect high morbidity and mortality rates, but also a perfect storm of destabilising outcomes. Economic decline, coupled with a sharp rise in new infections will almost certainly challenge the legitimacy of governing factions, upset elite bargains and rentier agreements, fuel tension between national and local governments and create opportunities for actors to perpetuate violence. As countries turn inward to focus on their own domestic public health emergencies and regional and international attention wanes, nascent and existing political and peace processes are at risk of losing ground or even unravelling. The knock-on effects could be profound, destabilising neighbouring countries and their respective regions, causing forced displacement and further economic disruption.
6. Could more private funding and on the ground input by non-state actors help to overcome the failing Westphalian System of sovereign nations under multilateralism and open up governance towards omnilateral democracy, omnibus for and by all?
Answer: this would be hoped but I am sceptical. Private funding can only operate under a set of rules and these rules and laws are set by the state - Westphalian or not, as in the case of the supranational EU. At present we rather see a strengthening of the Westphalian system, in my view not the best response possible but unfortunately in many cases supported by the citizens.
7. How to manage/avoid the reputational risk related to the potential perception that humanitarian and development actors (foreign) may be spreading Covid19 (either through vaccination or as Covid19 is sometimes perceived to have spread from Europe/West).
Answer: Good point - we make sure that personal going to a crisis region at ending tested in advance. Owing to national legislation in their countries of operation they may need to undergo quarantine before they can start operating.
8. Besides emphasizing the necessity to include Peace & Security in the approach (alongside with Development and Humanitarian Aid), I would also like to stress the importance of most optimal Public Information. I feel that, 2 months into COVID-19, many people still have very little correct information available to protect themselves and their communities. Facial masks, yes or no? Extra Vitamin D yes or no? Going outside or staying home, yes or no? Going to work to make a small income, or wait at home for aid to come, yes or no? How to aid the world population, especially in those regions that have less access to relevant and correct information, as such.
9. Indeed, the NGOs in the field are the vehicle to ensure survival today, social cohesion as well as public action's scrutiny. To ensure the nexus, we need to ensure NGOs and civil society organisations in general have the space to operate and their action is not been shrunk by governments. What is your take on this?

10. We would like to emphasize the value of dual mandated Organisations like World Food Programme, UNICEF as well as dual mandated NGOs for implementing the NEXUS. We even set up joint programmes (WFP, UNICEF) in Sahel and DRC and have seen very good results. What are your experiences?
The EU regularly funds the same agencies and sometimes even projects from both humanitarian and development sources. But we need a better structural dialogue with them on such projects and their steering.
11. How is the EU responding to the widening of gender inequalities due to Covid-19 through its humanitarian and development mechanisms?
12. What steps is the EC taking towards financing that is long-term and flexible to allow frontline responders to pivot their responses as needs change on the ground and address the pandemic's longer-term impacts?
13. In discussion with EU officials on the Triple Nexus approach, there was often confusion around the "peace" component, often with an exclusive focus on political peace processes and security. How does the EU define the peace pillar of the triple nexus and ensure it concerns peacebuilding too.
14. In the short-term, shocks are already being felt at a local level, as restrictive controls and limited access to resources puts a strain on social cohesion and deepen existing fault lines. In the medium to long-term, as the economic impacts unfold, the shocks are likely to exacerbate existing conflict drivers. To what extent is the EU/Netherlands supporting programming that builds social cohesion and addresses drivers of conflict within and alongside the COVID-19 response to urgent needs?
15. There is a need to consider specific conflict dynamics and the differences between contexts at the time of COVID-19. How is the EU/Netherlands ensuring that all programming focusing on COVID-19 adopts a conflict sensitive approach?
16. The OECD DAC recommends more joint analysis by development, peace and humanitarian teams. How is the EU supporting joint analysis from multiple sectors for the COVID-19 response?
17. How does the EU plan to engage "non-conventional" actors as the Armed Non-State actors (ANSAs) in the global EU response?
18. Is the EU already promoting inclusive dialogue with ANSAs considering their clear role across the nexus issues?
19. While the 3rd pillar of the EU response plan aims at addressing the economic and social consequences of the pandemic, it is almost exclusively oriented towards fiscal and institutional support. How is the EU actually planning to support the livelihood of affected populations?
20. What coordination is taking place with EU MS on the ground? What are the results?
21. Is the EU planning to take this opportunity to foster the localisation agenda and how?
22. From a programme quality perspective, what is the Commission's approach towards joining up life-saving activities and building longer term resilience?

23. What kind of interventions are ECHO and DEVCO planning to partner with local and national civil society organisations, including humanitarian groups, in those settings where working in partnership with the government may be more difficult due to conflict?

Specific Thematic Questions

1. Is there an alternative to massive testing to monitor this pandemic from the epidemiological point of view, given that global testing capacity is scarce and therefore difficult to access by poor countries?
2. Question for ECHO and DEVCO colleagues- are there opportunities for development funds to be channelled via ECHO? We have seen this done in relation to Cyclone Idai where EDF funds have been channelled via ECHO. Based on the most recent contribution by Jan Egeland it is humanitarian actors who are on the ground but ECHO is currently is drawing on limited reserves, while there are funds remaining on DEVCO side (based on the recent documents published by DEVCO).
3. Question for DEVCO colleagues: "adaptative management of grants." We are now in a very evolving contexts and what has been approved in a contract might need to change in 2 months, is DEVCO ready to implement changes in approved contracts when needed to fund this kind of social protection activities using an adaptative management approach?
4. Taking into account the urgency for budget support disbursement to address some partner countries' needs facing the Covid-19 crisis, how does the Commission ensure that the criteria for disbursement are met, especially for 2nd or following tranches?
5. As the EU is now reconsidering the Multiannual Financial Framework budget lines to better address the COVID crisis, what plans they have to rethink the Neighbourhood, Development and International Cooperation Instrument to ensure a stronger focus on transitioning from an emergency to a development phase in health and livelihood interventions?
6. As we will need a smooth Nexus transition and as the MFF process is getting more and more delayed, which steps are taken to guarantee signature of new DEVCO contracts in early 2021?
7. COVID-19 offers a perfect opportunity to apply nexus approaches and work towards common objectives. Has the EU established a coordination mechanism to ensure common objectives in the COVID-19 response, and are those objectives informed by joint analysis?
8. What EU funding instruments will be used complementarily to ensure the Nexus can be operationalised on the ground? How can EU partners access and use the funds made available?
9. What is going to be the division of labour between DEVCO and ECHO with regards to financing social protection programmes in COVID19 response? How can donors support aid partners with appropriate technical interventions in scaling up existing programmes as well as aiming for better and greater targeting to include those individuals or groups who have been left out?

Context Specific Questions

1. Covid and Sanctions: Will the EU work on reducing / limiting the impact of sanctions on countries such as Syria? Are there any efforts in that regards? How do the esteemed guests see this developing

Answer: No, I do not see that happen. What I see is an increase of humanitarian aid to IDPs in Syria and refugees from Syria and more political energy being put into ensuring better access to vulnerable people, including cross-border.

2. In the oPt, we are currently diverting part of our humanitarian assistance towards COVID-19 response. However, there are limits to this, since we also need to keep our funding for ongoing programs that are crucial to support protection and well-being of target communities. Will donors provide additional funding, knowing that they also have to respond first to their European constituencies?

3. I liked Jan Egeland for his use of Barsalogo to talk about nexus. I wanted to use the same context to make one comment. One of the main problems in Barsalogo (Center-North Burkina Faso) is related to water which is very scarce. The Covid19 was actually a trigger to engage discussion between humanitarian actors and development actors in Barsalogo. In fact, due to water scarcity, there was a water management system/mechanism set up in Barsalogo, which requires community participation in form of financial contribution. However, with the influx of displaced people, humanitarian actors were using water trucking to provide water to affected population in Barsalogo. With Covid, humanitarians increased efforts to provide water. Authorities then complained that the humanitarian actors may break the local water management system, as they are providing water for free, while they can't provide it for all, forever. Discussion to continue humanitarian assistance while maintaining local system is key (Nexus)"

4. With the first cases of coronavirus infections recorded, the Gaza Strip is bracing for what could become a cataclysmic outbreak. Is the Commission foreseeing specific contribution to help Gaza, i.e. stepping up its financial contribution to UNRWA?

Yes, there will soon be special COVID programmes for Palestine and in particular Gaza financed by ECHO and FPI in the European Commission.